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21 October 1965

BRIEFING NOTES  
FOR THE DCI

NORTH VIETNAM

(MAP, SAM Sites)

I. In North Vietnam, the number of surface-to-air missile sites continues to grow. This map shows 29 which had been confirmed by photography last week. There are now 32 confirmed, and evidence that several more exist.

A. I want to make it clear, however, that not all of these SAM sites are equipped with missile gear. We have been attempting to determine just how much missile equipment is in North Vietnam, but thus far we have been unable to come to any firm figure.

1. We believe that there is enough missile equipment for a minimum of six sites, and probably no more than ten sites.
2. The greatest number of sites noted with equipment at any one time was five. This information was obtained by photography on October 8th, when 17 of the SAM sites were photographed.

B. At present there are probably parallel Soviet and North Vietnamese organizations for the SAM system.

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We have also noted, however, that the Vietnamese are **assuming** some of the responsibility for operating the SAM sites.

E-1

~~TOP SECRET~~

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1. We estimate that between 1,000 and 1,500 Soviet military personnel are in North Vietnam. We believe this figure will remain stable, and that there will be no further increase unless there is a sudden escalation of the conflict.
  2. Soviet Defense Ministry officials have indicated that they do not want to get heavily involved, but that they would continue to provide equipment for the Vietnamese.
- C. Navy fighters on October 17th attacked and knocked out an operational SAM site at Kep Ha, northeast of Hanoi--one of the new sites which does not show on this map. The pilots reported they had destroyed several guidance and control vans, 10 missile transporters, and two missiles, one of which ignited and went zooming around the ground, burning itself out. There were probably Soviet personnel at the site, during the attack.
1. This was one of two sites which had just been spotted--occupied and operational--in photography from a drone reconnaissance aircraft. The next day our fighters went back after the second one, and the equipment was not there any more. They are making full use of their mobility and concealment.
- D. The Soviet surface-to-air missile system, however, has not proven to be as effective in North Vietnam as we expected it to be. We know of at least 58 occasions

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~~TOP SECRET~~

25X1

**TOP SECRET**

25X1

when these missiles have been fired. On October 5th alone, nine missiles were fired at aircraft attacking bridges in the Kep area, but there was only one hit. As of October 20, we had lost 137 aircraft in operations against North Vietnam, but only five of these were knocked down by surface-to-air missiles. Most of the planes were lost to conventional antiaircraft artillery.

- E. We have succeeded in rescuing 43 of the personnel whose aircraft were shot down. Another 49 have been killed in action, 22 are believed to be prisoners, and the rest are listed as missing in action.
- F. The 137 aircraft were lost in the course of more than 25,000 sorties, which means that the percentage of loss remains at or slightly under one half of one percent
- G. The high rate of misses by the SA-2 missiles can probably be explained in part by the fact that the sites are being operated by the North Vietnamese, who are relatively inexperienced.

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**TOP SECRET**

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**TOP SECRET**

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1. Our pilots, furthermore, now can often be warned when the FAN SONG guidance radar has locked on them, or when missiles are fired, and they have learned to execute successful evasive maneuvers.
- II. In recent weeks our aircraft have been attacking targets in northeastern North Vietnam. Specifically, we have succeeded in cutting the important rail link over which much of the military equipment reaches North Vietnam from Communist China and the Soviet Union.
- A. The North Vietnamese have put up an extremely vigorous defense in this area. Large numbers of missiles have been fired at our aircraft--fortunately, as I indicated, most have missed. They have even committed some of their jet fighters against US aircraft--something they have been very reluctant to do.
  - B. As air strikes in this area continue, we can expect the North Vietnamese to use everything they have to defend the rail line from further destruction.
    1. In an effort to improve their defenses in this area they have already positioned a number of their jet fighters at Kep--a recently improved airfield about 35 miles northeast of Hanoi. They have almost 70 MIG-17's, and a few more recently arrived in crates. They also have eight IL-28 BEAGLES. The Chinese have moved MIG-19s and a few MIG-21s up close to the border, and onto Hainan Island.

E-3

**TOP SECRET**

25X1

**TOP SECRET**

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III. Thus far, our air strikes have severely limited North Vietnam's capability to support a major offensive beyond its own borders. Its capability to support the insurgency in South Vietnam, however, has not been diminished to any great degree.

A. One of the major accomplishments of the airstrikes has been to force North Vietnam to disperse its personnel and supply bases, and to divert a great deal of manpower and material

to repair and reconstruction work.

B. The economic losses caused by the air strikes are still small in relation to the total economic activity, primarily because most of the targets we are attacking are military and outside the major economic and industrial areas.

1. There are, however, increasing indications of localized strains on the economy, particularly in the supply of food and its distribution.

2. The bombing of the rail lines leading from Communist China to Hanoi has probably had a greater effect on the economy than any other targets bombed to date.

C. On the political side, there is still no sign of any basic change in Hanoi's attitude; the North Vietnamese continue to assert their determination to press on with the war.

E-4

**TOP SECRET**

25X1

**TOP SECRET**

IV. Seven months of almost daily bombings in the southern provinces have created morale problems in North Vietnam.

A. Individual citizens, in private letters to relatives abroad, show fear for their personal safety. The letters reflect general unhappiness over the disruption of family life and casualties among family and friends.

B. Intercepted messages, furthermore, indicate that the regime has serious morale problems among the civilian work gangs repairing the bomb damage.

1. These reports discuss shortages of food and other daily necessities, and reveal a high sickness and desertion rate.

2. None of these problems, however, is known to have generated any organized resistance to the Hanoi regime or its policies.

C. Hanoi's propaganda refers backhandedly to the widespread disruption of normal civilian life in the bombed areas.

1. In the current campaign to publicize US atrocities in Vietnam, for example, the regime itself charges that the bombings have killed many people and "leveled cities."

E-5

**TOP SECRET**

**TOP SECRET**

25X1

2. Although exaggerated, the statements constitute an admission that the regime has been unable to give its civilians complete protection from the side effects of raids.
- D. In the northern part of the country there are few signs of flagging morale. In the capital city of Hanoi, Western diplomats report that people migrate to the city from other parts of the country because they believe it is the safest place to be.
1. Complaints registered in private letters from many sections of the country tend to be balanced by others indicating strong popular support for the regime and reflecting an effective regime propaganda effort which directs individual emotions into constructive patriotic channels.

**TOP SECRET**

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